personnel missing from the 1965 and 1971 wars are believed to be in custody in Pakistan.

(c) Pakistan does not provide information regarding these matters.

(d) The question of the early release and repatriation of all Indian prisoners under detention in Pakistan has been repeatedly taken up with the Government of Pakistan. The matter was also raised by the External Affairs Minister in his meeting with the Foreign Minister of Pakistan on 18/12/1996. Our efforts continue.

SAARC Foreign Ministers' conference on Suppression of Terrorism

2630. SHRI RAJUBHAI A. PARMAR: Will the Minister of EXTERNAL AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether the SAARC Foreign Ministers' Conference held in New Deli in December last stressed the need to end terrorism, especially international terrorism;

(b) if so, the details in this regard and the resolution if any adopted in the matter; and

(c) the steps taken by SAARC Members thereon so far?

THE MINISTER OF EXTERNAL AFFAIRS (SHRI I.K. GUJRAL): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. The Seventeenth Session of the SAARC Council of Ministers held in New Delhi in December 1996 reviewed progress in implementation of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism. The Session took note of recent international initiatives, particularly by the United Nations Organisation, to combat terrorism. In this regard, it called upon the Member States to cooperate regionally as well as support international measures towards the elimination of terrorism. In addition, it noted that some Member States had already enacted enabling legislation to give effect to the Convention, and urged other Member States to do so at the earliest. It emphasised the need for regular flow of relevant information to enable the SAARC Terrorist Offences Monitoring Desk (STOMD) in Colombo to function effectively.

(c) Progress in implementation of the SAARC Regional Convention on Suppression of Terrorism is reviewed at successive SAARC Summits and Council of Ministers' Meetings, and is to be reviewed next at the ninth SAARC Summit to be held at Male (Maldives) in May 1997. Annual meetings of Liaison Officers have been held since 1994 for exchanging information and making recommendations to the Council of Ministers for advancing cooperation under the Convention. The STOMD has been established at colombo to store, exchange and disseminate relevant information about terrorist incidents, activities, strategies and profiles. The subject was also discussed at the SAARC Conference on Cooperation in Police Matters, held in July 1996 at Colombo.

Delay in character verification cases by Delhi Police

2631. SHRI GHUFRAN AZAM: Will the Minister of HOME AFFAIRS be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that a good number of cases of character verification etc. of the selected employees in the Government jobs are pending with the Delhi Police;

(b) if so, the details of all such cases which are pending for more than a month;

(c) the laid down policy of Government in such cases; and

(d) the action contemplated in the matter?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF HOME AFFAIRS (SHRI MOHD. MAQBOOL DAR): (a) to (d) No case of character verification is